

## Introduction

### Mission

This guide is intended to provide an overview of the various phases of land development in College Station. It is not, however, intended to provide every technical detail or requirement of each phase of the process. While many of the details of the development process are not included in the manual, it is the responsibility of the developer to ensure all appropriate ordinances and procedures are followed. If you ever have any questions that are not addressed in this manual, or if you need clarification on something that is, call the Planning & Development Services Department, and they will help you find the answer and guide you through the process.

### Purpose

The City of College Station Development Guide is designed to help the Development Coordinator and the Planning & Development Services Department inform interested citizens and potential developers about how the process works. The purpose of this guide is to provide an overview of the entire development review process and to take readers step-by-step through the phases.

### Overview

The City of College Station's policies, standards, and regulations regarding land use and development are designed to help ensure the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens, while protecting the rights and privileges of property owners. The development review process is the City's administrative system developed to assist in the efficient and consistent enforcement of these policies, standards, and regulations.

The development process is made up of separate processes that may be required in order to build and occupy a building. Examples of these processes include zoning, platting, site plan, and permitting.

The number of processes with which you will need to be involved depends on your development plans and the existing circumstances of your property. At the earliest stages of planning your project, you should be aware of which steps you will need to take. You will also need to know where each step is initiated, what information will be required, who will be involved, and what will happen. This manual is an attempt to provide you with answers to these and other pertinent questions.

This guide describes the most recent development processes in College Station. In using this guide, it is helpful to remember that although various processes can be started simultaneously, the process is designed to run in sequence. Collectively, each section of this manual details each phase of the review process that make up the development process, answering critical questions to help ease your way through the system.

The information contained in this guide will be updated regularly. Updated editions will be available both in the Planning & Development Services Department and on our website <[www.cstx.gov](http://www.cstx.gov)>. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of this guide. To prevent any misinformation or problems that may arise from out-of-date information, always contact the appropriate City Staff before beginning any of the review processes described in this manual.

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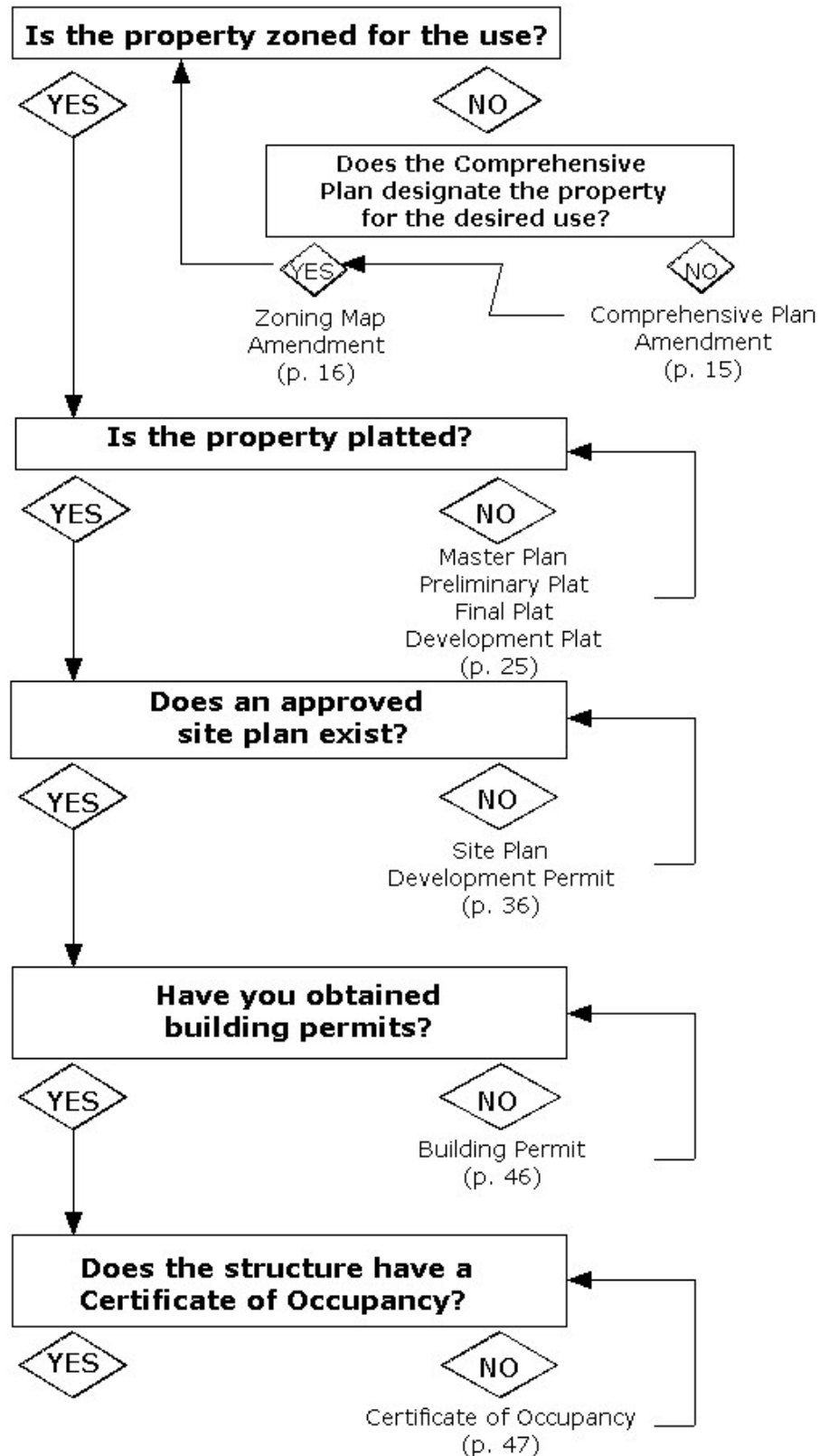
## Role of the Development Coordinator

The City of College Station is committed to economic development and to being a helpful and enthusiastic partner in the development process.

To enhance this partnership, the Development Coordinator helps manage the administration of the development process by documenting this process to make it a more understandable system.

The Development Coordinator has two major roles in encouraging development in the City of College Station. The first role is that of coordinator: to assess projects submitted, to identify potential problems, and to open lines of communication throughout the City at the earliest stages of the development process. As a second role, the Development Coordinator is responsible for working through the more complicated issues that may arise.

## PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



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## Development Review Bodies - Summary

PROCEDURE	City Council	P & Z Comm.	Zoning Bd of Adj.	Design Rev. Bd.	Admini-strator	Building Official	Dev. Eng.	Court
<b>CITY COUNCIL</b>								
Oversize Participation	D						R	
Development Agreement	D				RR		R	
Conditional Use permit	D	R			RR			
Zoning Map Amendment	D	R			RR			
Text Amendment	D	R			RR			
Comp. Plan Amendment	D	R			RR			
Impact Fee/CIP Priorities	D	R						
<b>PLANNING &amp; ZONING COMMISSION</b>								
Preliminary Plat		D			RR		R	A
Final Plat		D			RR		R	A
Waiver of Subdivision Standard		D			RR		R	A
Alternative Arch. Material		D			R			
<b>ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT</b>								
Variance			D		R	RR	RR	A
Administrative Appeal			D		R			A
Zoning Map Interpretation			D		R			A
<b>DESIGN REVIEW BOARD</b>								
Design District Site Plan		A		D	R			
PDD/P-MUD Concept Plan		A		D	R			
Des. Dist. Building/Sign Review		A		D	R			
NG & WPC Parking Appeal		A		D	R			
<b>ADMINISTRATOR</b>								
Interpretation			A		D			
Sign Permit			A		D			
Site Plan		A		A*	D			
Administrative Adjustment			A		D			
Des. Dist. Bldg. Or Sign, Minor			A		D			
Minor or Amending Plat		A			D		R	
PD Concept Plan Minor Amend.		A			D			
Shared Parking Plans		A			D		R	
<b>BUILDING OFFICIAL</b>								
Building Permit						D		
Certificate of Occupancy					R	D		
Certificate of Completion					R	D	R	
<b>DEVELOPMENT ENGINEER</b>								
Development Permit							D	
Driveway Application				A			D	
Alternative Const. Material				A			D	
*Section 3.5.E and 3.6.E Only.								
<b>KEY: D</b> =Final Action/Decision <b>A</b> =Appeal <b>R</b> =Recommend <b>RR</b> =Review/Report								

## Development Review Bodies

The following section sets out the many different governing bodies, citizen committees, Staff, and administrative roles involved in the development review process. These bodies provide oversight of development, and help guide growth in the community. The following bodies are involved in a number of development review processes: City Council, Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z), Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA), Parks and Recreation Board, Design Review Board (DRB), and Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals.

### **City Council**

The City Council consists of six members and the Mayor who are elected at-large for 3-year terms. The members of the City Council generally meet on the second and fourth Thursday of every month. The City Council sets out the strategic goals for the City, which guides policy development and priorities for Staff. The City Council is also responsible for appointing members of citizen committees, and takes final action on a number of development review processes.

#### **Appointments**

The City Council has the responsibility of appointing and removing any member of the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z), Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA), Parks and Recreation Board, Design Review Board (DRB), and Construction Board of Appeals and Adjustments.

#### **Final Action**

- Development agreements and oversize participation requests;
- Conditional use permits;
- Zoning map amendments (rezoning);
- Text amendments;
- Comprehensive Plan amendments;
- Impact fee land use decisions; and
- Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) priorities.

### **Planning & Zoning Commission**

The Planning & Zoning Commission is a seven member citizen committee to review and make recommendations to Council about planning and development activity and guidelines. The Planning & Zoning Commission generally meets on the first and third Thursday of every month. All meetings of the Commission where a quorum of four members is present are open to the public.

#### **Comprehensive Plan**

The Planning & Zoning Commission makes recommendations for the coordination and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Recommendations to the City Council**

- Conditional use permits;
- Zoning map amendments (rezoning);
- Text amendments;
- Comprehensive Plan amendments;
- Impact fee land use decisions; and
- Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) priorities.

#### **Final Action**

- Applicable appeals Design Review Board decisions;
- Preliminary and final plats (and in some cases, minor and amending plats);
- Waivers of standards to Subdivision Design and Improvements (Article 8, UDO);
- Appeal of the Administrator's determination that a proposed Master Plan is not in compliance with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan;

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- Appeal of the Administrator's denial of a final, minor, or amending plat;
- Appeal of the Administrator's denial of an alternative parking plan; and
- Appeal of the Administrator's interpretation of the Subdivision Regulations.

### **Zoning Board of Adjustment**

The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) is made up of five regular members and up to four alternate members to hear and decide appeals for interpretation, special exceptions, and variances. Meetings of the Zoning Board of Adjustment are generally held on the first Tuesday of each month, as needed. All meetings of the Board where a quorum of four members is present are open to the public and no variance or appeal can be granted without a concurring vote of four members.

#### **Variances**

- Building setbacks;
- Parking number or dimensions;
- Parking island number or dimensions;
- Signs (excluding sign regulations in the ETJ);
- Maximum building height;
- Lot size or dimension requirements, and
- Applicable drainage variances.

#### **Administrative Appeals**

To hear and decide appeals where there is an alleged error made by the Administrator in the enforcement of the UDO.

#### **Official Zoning Map**

To interpret the intent of the Official Zoning Map where uncertainty exists because the physical features on the ground vary from those on the Official Zoning Map.

### **Parks and Recreation Board**

The Parks and Recreation Board is made up of seven members appointed by the City Council for two year terms. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month. Among the Parks and Recreation Board responsibilities is deciding parkland dedication requirements for residential development. This board decides land dedication or fee in lieu of land that is required during the Final Plat or Site Plan stage of any residential development.

### **Design Review Board**

The Design Review Board consists of seven regular members and two alternate members. The DRB meets the second and fourth Friday of each month, as needed to make decisions about design and aesthetic considerations development in the City's design districts and appeals to non-residential architectural standards.

The Board is chaired by the Chairperson of the Planning & Zoning Commission, and made up of the following six regular members and two alternates appointed by the City Council:

- Registered architect
- Business person
- Landscape architect
- Developer or land owner in a design district
- Person knowledgeable in aesthetic judgment
- Citizen-at-large

#### **Site and Concept Plans**

The Design Review Board hears and decides design district site plans and concept plans for Planned Development Districts (PDD) and Planned Mixed-Use Districts (P-MUD).

## **Non-Residential Architectural Standards**

The Design Review Board approves building material substitutions and alternate colors for franchised restaurants, screening provisions, architectural relief elements, and parking lot concepts for all non-residential architectural standards.

## **Design District Review**

The Design Review Board hears and decides building and sign materials and colors in any designated design district such as Wolf Pen Creek and Northgate.

## **Appeals**

- Design district parking;
- Driveways;
- Site plan requirements (UDO, Section 3.5.E); and
- Buffer requirements (UDO, Section 7.6).

## **Construction Board of Appeals and Adjustment**

The Construction Board of Appeals and Adjustment is a five member volunteer citizen board appointed every two years by the City Council. They meet as necessary to hear appeals of decisions and interpretations of the Building Official and Fire Marshal, as well as considering variances for all adopted technical building codes. The members of the Construction Board of Appeals also serve as the Building and Standards Commission, and make recommendations to City Council for adoption of the building codes that govern technical specifications for building structures.

## **Administrator and Staff**

The Administrator is known as the Director of Planning & Development Services. The Staff consists of various employees of the Planning & Development Services Department that are responsible for processing and permitting development applications. Under the supervision of the Administrator, the Staff facilitates the administration of the Unified Development Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. Where authority has been granted, the Administrator and Staff may make the following decisions:

- Administer and enforce the provisions of the UDO.
- Make written interpretations of the UDO and Subdivision Regulations when requested.
- Review proposed construction, moving, alteration, or use of the land for compliance with the provisions of the UDO prior to issuance of a Building Permit.
- Conduct site inspections to insure site compliance with the provisions of the UDO prior to Certificate of Occupancy, checking for parking, landscaping, buffers, and any other site specifications reflected on the approved site plan.

## **Final Action**

- Sign permits;
- Site plans (Design district site plans must be approved by DRB);
- Administrative adjustments;
- Minor and amending plats;
- Determination of building plot;
- Minor design district projects;
- Alternative parking plans; and
- Minor changes of previously DRB approved materials and colors.

## **Building Official**

The Building Official is charged with the oversight of the Building Services Division of the Planning & Development Services Department. This division is responsible for reviewing building plans for compliance with the City's technical codes as well as UDO, conducting inspections during and after construction to determine compliance with City regulations, and issuing Building Permits, Certificates of Occupancy, and Certificates of Completion.

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## **Development Engineer**

The Development Engineer and the engineering staff are responsible for reviewing development for compliance with the City's engineering requirements and flood hazard protection policies. With regard to these responsibilities, the Development Engineer is involved in the following development processes:

- Driveway applications;
- Development permit applications;
- Subdivision Regulations;
- City Drainage Policy and Design Standards/Engineering Standards Manual;
- Areas of Special Flood Hazard;
- Drainage Policy and Design Standards;
- Watercourse alteration notifications;
- Development Agreements;
- Interpret the terms and provisions of Section 7.8 of the UDO, Drainage and Stormwater Management; and
- Alternative materials or standards for site construction.



## General Approval Procedures

The provisions of the UDO and the Comprehensive Plan apply to all development that occurs within the corporate limits of the City of College Station and, where applicable, the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The ETJ consists of all land that is contiguous to the College Station City limits that is unincorporated and not within another city's ETJ. The ETJ line extends 3.5 miles from the city limits.

### Pre-application Conference (PAC)

Prior to the submission of an application, a Pre-application Conference with Staff to discuss procedures, standards, or regulations may be required for the following projects:

- Development permits with areas of special flood hazard;
- Design district site plans;
- Development plats;
- Master Plans;
- Conditional use permits;
- Zoning map amendments (rezonings); and
- Concept plans (PDD and P-MUD zoned properties).

An Administrator may waive a PAC upon consideration of a proposal. Also, a Pre-application Conference is optional for all other applications. Applicants are encouraged to schedule and attend an optional Pre-application Conference with the Development Staff prior to submitting any application in order to ask questions, receive feedback from Staff about a proposal, and understand some of the issues that may arise during the development process, however a PAC is not considered a "permit" or in any way vests a proposal.

Typically, PACs are scheduled on Monday afternoons. In order for Staff to identify issues and prepare material for the PAC, any material the applicant has prepared on the property must be submitted to Staff for preliminary review. This material **must** be submitted by the Monday before the appointment at 10:00 a.m., in order to give Staff sufficient time to review the material with City departments that are involved in the development process.

PACs are typically attended by the Development Coordinator, a Staff Planner, a Development Engineer, and representatives from other departments which will have involvement in the project.

### Deadlines

Deadlines are each Monday at 10:00 a.m. Deadlines that fall on a holiday are moved to the next business day at 10:00 a.m. Official submission deadlines for projects that must go before the Planning & Zoning Commission can be found in General Development Information (page 63). An application will not be considered officially submitted until it has been determined to be complete. Applications can be obtained from the Planning & Development Services Department, or on the City's website at <[www.cstx.gov](http://www.cstx.gov)>.

### Application Completeness

A determination of application completeness will be made by the Planning & Development Services Department within five (5) days of the application deadline. An application shall be considered submitted only after the Administrator, or designee, has determined it is complete – i.e. if it is provided in the required form, includes all mandatory information (including all exhibits), and is accompanied by the applicable fee. If an application is determined to be incomplete, the applicant will receive written notice and an explanation of the deficiencies. No further processing will occur until the deficiencies are corrected. If they are not corrected within 30 days, the application will be null and void and the application fee forfeited. A complete application will continue to be processed.

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## Facilitation Meetings

Facilitation Meetings are scheduled one week after the submittal deadline in order for the applicant to meet with City Staff. This meeting is optional for the applicant, but it offers an opportunity to go over project comments with any Staff assigned to the project, and ask questions, or clarify issues. The applicant will be notified of the Facilitation Meeting when they receive Staff Review Comments 5-6 days after an application deadline.

## Required Public Notice

State law requires public notice for some development activity. The chart to the right illustrates the various activities that must have public notice and the type of notice required. All notices must contain the general location of the land under consideration, the substance of the application, the type of request, current zoning (for rezonings), time, date, and location of the hearing, and contact information for the City. The cost of public notice is included as part of the application fee.

Application Type	Published	Mailed	Agenda Posted
Comprehensive Plan Amendment	X	X	X
Zoning Map Amend. (Rezoning)	X	X	X
UDO Text Amendment	X		X
Conditional Use Permit	X	X	X
Subdivision - Replats*	X*	X*	X
Design District - Site Plan/Bldg.			X
Variances	X	X	X
Appeals – Site Plan & Driveway			X
Waiver – Subdivision Design			X
Waiver – Buffer Requirements			X
Administrative Appeals	X		X
* Only when required per the Local Government Code.			

## Required Public Hearings

Application Type	Zoning Board of Adjustment	Planning & Zoning Commission	City Council
Comprehensive Plan Amendment		X	X
Zoning Map Amendment (Rezoning)		X	X
UDO Text Amendment		X	X
Conditional Use Permit		X	X
Subdivision*		X	
Variances	X		
Administrative Appeals	X		

\* Only when required per the Local Government Code.

## Appeals

An appeal of any final decision must be filed with the appropriate entity within 30 days of the decision by the Administrator or the applicant. If no appeal is filed within 30 days, the decision will be final. Appeals of decisions of the Zoning Board of Adjustments are made to a Court of Law, and must be made within ten days of a decision.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What should be submitted for a PAC?

The Planning & Development Services Department will schedule a PAC with as much, or as little, information the applicant has available. The minimum may be just an address or approximate location and an idea of a use on the property. Although a PAC is not the time for formal review of a project submission, with more specific information, the planning staff may be able to provide more detailed information. PACs are set up to be informative sessions for the applicant about any problems that may arise with the project, as well as detail about the processes that have to be completed for development to take place.

### 2. What happens if my application is submitted after the deadline?

Any application submitted after a deadline will be subject to the following deadline. Staff may be able to review an application before that following deadline but only after all the applications for the current deadline have been processed.

### 3. What happens to my application after it is submitted?

Once a complete application is submitted, it is logged by Staff in order for distribution to the Project Managers. Every week, the cases are distributed for review. For applications that are approved at Staff level, once the first review is completed, Planning & Development Services will contact you about the status of your application. This may include comments that need to be addressed for a second review. After the comments are addressed, the information should be submitted by the applicant to be reviewed again for the next deadline. This cycle may continue until the project satisfactorily meets the City's regulations.

Other processes, like Rezoning and Comprehensive Plan amendments, are scheduled for the Planning & Zoning Commission to take action according to the submission deadlines, after Staff review.

Building Permit applications are reviewed by the Plans Examiners before any permit can be issued.